

Benefits and Human Resources Management

Among Efforts to Attract and Retain a High Quality Workforce

Administrative Office staff develop and administer personnel, payroll, retirement, and insurance programs for Judiciary employees; provide counseling related to benefits and retirement; and communicate with Judiciary employees through a variety of media to explain new benefits or changes to existing programs.

Flexible Benefits. The Flexible Benefit Program gives judges and Judiciary employees the ability to pay for certain health-care and dependent-care expenses on a pre-tax basis. The first annual open election period was held early in fiscal year 2000. Employee response was overwhelming, with 20 percent of the workforce electing to participate.

Long-Term Care Insurance. More than 4,500 employees and their relatives applied for coverage during the first open season, held in November 1999.

Commuter Benefit Program. The Administrative Office developed and introduced a commuter benefit program in 2000 that consists of a transportation reimbursement account and a parking reimbursement account. Now, courts can offer judges and Judiciary employees the option of paying for mass-transit and vanpooling expenses and parking costs incurred for commuting to and from work on a pre-tax basis.

Public Transportation Subsidies. The Director delegated to chief judges the authority to establish subsidies, using local court funds, for employees' use of public transportation to commute to and from work. A number of courts throughout the Judiciary have decided to adopt such a program for their employees.

Flexible benefits, long-term care insurance, and public transportation subsidies are among the Judiciary's efforts to attract and retain a high-quality workforce.

Professional Liability Insurance Reimbursement Program. Beginning in February 1999, judges were allowed to be reimbursed for up to half the cost of the annual premium for professional liability insurance, or \$150, whichever was less. The Judicial Conference extended this program to several other groups of court officials in April 2000. Later in the year, the \$150 reimbursement limit was lifted for judges.

Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS). A new personnel and payroll system for the Judiciary was successfully implemented in the Administrative Office, Federal Judicial Center, and U.S. Sentencing Commission in 2000. Known as HRMIS, the new system was developed with Peoplesoft, a commercial software package. A contractor modified the software to meet Judiciary-specific needs. The most significant modification was integrating it with the Judiciary's Central Accounting System.

The successful testing and implementation of the system in the Administrative Office will help with full court implementation.